

SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 7.

SANITARY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON CITY, D. C. }
Treasury Building, June 22, 1861. }

SIR,—The Sanitary Commission just ordered by the United States Government, has a field of labor open to it, of vast importance and immense urgency. The lives of 250,000 troops, four times more endangered from disease than from the casualties of war, are now hanging in the scales; and whether fifty per cent. of them are carried off by dysentery, fever, and cholera, in the course of the next four months, or whether they are maintained, at what under the best condition is the double risk of life, depends, under God, upon the most efficient application of sanitary science to their protection. In the sudden and enormous responsibility thrown upon the Government, the usual medical dependence is so strained, that extraordinary means are necessary to meet the case. Under these circumstances, our Commission, with special power and duties, has been brought into existence. To avoid political jealousies, and secure a Board of harmonious and high-toned advisers, it has been thought desirable to derive the support of the Commission from the public, rather than the Government. The Commissioners freely give their time, experience, and labor to the country. But they must keep active agents at numerous points constantly and vigilantly at work, in urging the preventive measures on which they depend for success; and this involves a large expenditure of money. It is supposed that fifty thousand dollars could be expended with the greatest advantage, during the present year, in the work of the Commis-

sion, and that every single dollar so spent would save one life. Every dollar less than this placed at the disposal of the Commission, must be considered as the needless exposure and probable loss of a life ! It is hoped that the character and standing of the Commissioners is the only warrant the public will require for their energetic and faithful performance of the duties assigned them. Under these circumstances, the undersigned, members of the Sanitary Commission now in session in New York, ask the immediate contributions of the men of wealth in as generous a measure as the greatness of the interest at stake, and the urgency of the case may prompt their humane hearts and fore-looking minds.

It is hardly necessary to suggest that every soldier, who survives the exposure of the next four months, will be worth for military purposes two fresh recruits ; that every man lost by neglect makes a complaining family, and forms a ground of unpopularity for the war ; that every sick man deprives the ranks of one or two well men detailed to take care of him ; that pestilence will demoralize and frighten those whom armed enemies cannot scare ; that the men now in the field are the flower of the nation ; that their places cannot be filled either at home, or in the ranks ; and that the economical, the humane, the patriotic, the successful conduct of this war, and its speedy termination, is now more dependent on the *health* of the troops than any and all other conditions combined.

Help us, then, dear sir, to do this work, for which our machinery is now complete ! Help us generously ; help us at once !

In the name of God, humanity, and our country.

Yours fraternally,

HENRY W. BELLOWS.

PROF. A. D. BACHE.

ELISHA HARRIS, M. D.

GEORGE W. CULLUM, U. S. Army.

ALEXANDER E. SHIRAS, U. S. Army.

ROBERT C. WOOD, M. D., U. S. Army.

WILLIAM H. VAN BUREN, M. D.

WOLCOTT GIBBS, M. D.

SAMUEL G. HOWE, M. D.

CORNELIUS R. AGNEW, M. D.

J. S. NEWBERRY, M. D.

GEORGE T. STRONG.

FREDERICK LAW OLMTED,

Commissioners.